

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 227073 TOSEC 270067

FOR SAUNDERS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 12258 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALGIERS
AMMAN BEIRUT DAMASCUS JIDDA KHARTOUM KUWAIT LONDON MOSCOW
TEL AVIV TRIPOLI TUNIS 11 SEP 76

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 12258

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG LY JO SY

SUBJ: PREPARATIONS FOR SUMMIT ON LEBANON

SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH SYRIA, WITH ALLGED JORDANIAN REINFORCEMENTS,
IS REPORTED PLANNING NEW ASSULTS IN LEBANON, CAIRO PRESS EASES
OFF ON ANTI-SYRIAN PROPAGANDA SEPTEMBER 11. THERE ARE HINTS
THAT EGYPT MAY AT LEAST FIND ROLE IN LEBANON, SINCE MODERATES
MAY GENUINELY BE SEEKING GOE DIPLOMATIC ASSISTANCE. FAHMY IS
GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC. END SUMMARY

1. FOR FIRST TIME IN MANY MONTHS, THERE ARE FAINT HINTS THAT
EGYPT MIGHT BE IN A POSITION TO PLAY HELPFUL ROLE IN LEBANON.
SINCE EGYPT HAS BEEN UNABLE IMPOST ITS INFLUENCE IN DAMASCUS
OR BEIRUT, GOE'S ABILITY END FIGHTING IN LEBANON HAS HINGED ON
DISPUTANTS' WILLINGNESS APPLY TO CAIRO FOR HELP. MODERATE
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LEBANESE PARTIES MIGHT JUST POSSIBLY BE PREPARING TO DO

SO; GEMAYEL AND SA'IB SALEM ARE APPARENTLY ACTUALLY COMING TO CAIRO IN NEXT FEW DAYS -- NEITHER HAS BEEN HERE FOR MANY MONTHS. PLO, WHICH PRESUMABLY EAGER TO END FIGHTING, HAS HAD ITS FONMIN IN CAIRO SINCE ALC MEETING WEEK AGO.

2. ANOTHER HOPEFUL STRAW IN WIND IS TONE OF CAIRO PRESS REPORTEDLY SEPTEMBER 11, WHICH FOCUSES ON PREPARATIONS FOR SUMMIT (NOW SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 16 OR 17, PROCEEDED BY TWO-DAY FONMIN MEETING), WITHOUT GRATITUOUS SLAPS AT SYRIA. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, FONMINS OF SAG AND GOK ARE REPORTED TO BE ARRIVING SOON IN DAMASCUS WHERE THEY WILL EXERT GOOD OFFICES BETWEEN SARG AND PLO WHICH WILL, "IN TURN, CLEAR ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA".

3. DEPARTURE OF ARAB LEAGUE REP AL-KHULI AND TUNISIAN FONMIN CHATTI (CHAIRMAN OF CURRENT ALC) FOR DAMASCUS IS SIMILARLY REPORTED IN OPTIMISTIC VEIN. "WELL -INFORMED ARAB CIRCLES" ARE CITED AS SAYING AL REPS CARRYING WITH THEM NEW PEACE PLAN WHICH CONCENTRATES ON TWO POINTS: (A) POSSIBLE MEETING UNDER AL-KHULI IN SHTURA, ATTENDANCE BY REPS OF LEBANON, SYRIAN AND PLO, TO WORK OUT CEASE-FIRE, AND (B) CALL FOR WITHDRAWAL OF "PROGRESSIVE FORCES" FROM MOUNT LEBANON AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY ASF "IN TURN FOR SOME CONCESSIONS BY SARG". (BEIRUT PRESS SPECULATION THAT AL'S SYG RIAD WILL GO TO LEBANON IS INCORRECT, AS HE HAS ALREADY DEPARTED FOR LONDON EN ROUTE TO UNGA).

4. TWO ARAB "PARTIES" TO LEBANESE DISPUTE ARE EMPHATICALLY EXCLUDED FROM POSITIVE TREATMENT IN CAIRO PRESS SEPTEMBER 11. THESE ARE LIBYA AND JORDAN. HKJ, ACCORDING TO FRONT-PAGE STORIES, IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE DISPATCHED 100 TANKS AND 1000 TROOPS TO TAKE UP POSITIONS WITH SYRIANS IN "EASTERN AND SOUTHER SECTORS" OF LEBANON. THIS "GRAVE DEVELOPMENT" IS "FIRST OPEN MANIFESTATION" OF JORDANIAN POLICY AND COMES AT TIME WHEN CAIRO IS SEEKING ARRANGE A CEASE-FIRE "WITH GEMAYEL AND JUMBLATT". PAPERS REPORT THAT "AIM" OF THIS REINFORCEMENT IS TO PREPARE FOR ALL OUT ATTACK AGAINST PROGRESSIVE AND PALESTINIAN POSITIONS. ALTHOUGH SYRIAN IS OBVIOUSLY ALSO A VILLAIN IN THIS REPORT, PRESS ATTACK IS CLEARLY CONFIDENTIAL

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AIMED AT HKJ AND IS PRESUMABLY A REACTION TO PRESISTENT RUMORS THAT SARKIS, ASAD AND HUSAIN ARE DUE TO MEET SEPTEMBER 18 TO HAMMER OUT SOME KIND OF PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT ON CONFEDERATION. (COMMENT: FAHMY'S OFFICE DIRECTOR TOLD CHARGE SEPT 11 THAT GOE HAS HAD INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT JORDANIAN MILITARY FORCE IS IN LEBANON, CLAIMING THAT THIS WOULD BE LOGICAL MOVE FOR HUSAIN WHO WISHES

TO INVOLVE HIMSELF IN RESOLUTION OF LEBANESE CONFLICT.)

5. COMMENT: IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH
CHARGE SEP 11, BOTH FAHMY AND HIS OFFICE DIRECTOR
AL-BAZ EXPRESSED GUARDED OPTIMISM THAT GENUINE
DESIRE END FIGHTING IS GROWING IN LEBANON. AL-BAZ
WAS PARTICULARLY SANGUINE, SAYING FAHMY'S UPCOMING
CONSULTATIONS COULD BRING DISPUTE FAR ENOUGH
ALONG ROAD TO RESOLUTION THAT OCTOBER SUMMIT COULD
FOCUS ON RECONSTRUCTION AND ASSISTANCE. FAHMY,
MORE CAUTIOUS, WORRIED ALOUD ABOUT ALLEGED
UNPREDICITABILITY OF SARG AND "MARONITES" (IE CHAMOUN).
PERHAPS SIGNIFICANTLY, HE DID NOT INCLUDE
JUNBLATT IN HIS LIST OF UNPREDICTABLES. MATTHEWS
UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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